



DeIDOT Will Utilize Federal Funding

By: Carolann Wicks, P.E., Secretary, Delaware Department of Transportation

December 10, 2008 -- There has been much conversation on a national level regarding a possible federal stimulus package for infrastructure, including road and transit projects. Recently at an event on I-95, I joined Governor Ruth Ann Minner, U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, U.S. Congressman Mike Castle and our partners in the industries of tourism, construction, and business in advocating for passage of such a stimulus package.

Capital road and transit projects can fulfill several goals that benefit the state and economy through improved quality of life, reduced congestion, increased safety, improved air quality and significant job creation. We have work that needs to be done. The construction industry has the resources. We just need to know what the funding is and how we can spend it.

Much of the discussion has been at the national level, but Delawareans should know we are preparing for whatever scenario may come. Right now, it's not clear how much funding would come to Delaware, nor what projects may qualify.

Regardless, we will be ready to go. As President of the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials (NASTO), I have a seat at the table on the national level in advocating for a stimulus package, and helping frame the criteria by which infrastructure projects would qualify for funding. I am joined by my colleagues from other states, known collectively as the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Together we are working closely with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to determine the criteria by which capital projects will be eligible for funding. On December 8 in Washington D.C. my colleagues and I had productive discussions with Congressional leaders and their staffs on this very topic.

In Delaware there are various avenues we could take, again depending on the funding made available and the criteria spelled out. Prior to finalizing priorities, we will work closely with local planning organizations and many others.

Some of the areas we are currently analyzing include:

- Paving and rehabilitating highways and other roadways.
- Safety improvements and congestion reducing projects.
- Continued investment in intelligent transportation systems, including increasing ability to control traffic signals from a central location.
- Bridge maintenance and repairs.
- Expanding park and ride lots, other transit facilities, sidewalks and transportation enhancements.

There is much work to do but we are hopeful that Congress will pass a federal stimulus package that includes funding for transportation infrastructure.

